

Message Text

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PAGE 01 NEW DE 14978 061708Z

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C O N F I D E N T I A L NEW DELHI 14978

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ELAB, IN

SUBJECT: AAFLI IN INDIA

REF: NEW DELHI 14347

1. SECRETARY OF INTUC INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE, RAM LAL THAKAR, PROVIDED SLIGHTLY DIFFERENT EXPLANATION THAN THAT OFFERED BY H.D. MUKERJI (REFTEL) AS TO WHY INTUC WILL NOT SPONSOR AN AAFLI REQUEST OPEN A PERMANENT OFFICE IN INDIA. WHEREAS MUKERJI STRESSED INTUC PROBLEMS WITHIN CONGRESS PARTY AND ITS VULNERABILITY TO ATTACK FROM CONGRESS LEFT-WINGERS, THAKAR SAID AAFLI IS NMJ NOW ACCEPTABLE TO INTUC BECAUSE IT WAS FINANCED BY USG. HE EMPHASIZED THAT INTUC HAD NO RESERVATIONS WHATSOEVER ABOUT RELATIONS WITH THE AFL-CIO AND WOULD RESIST ANY ATTEMPT FROM OFFICIAL OR OTHER QUARTERS TO LIMIT THAT RELATIONSHIP. THAKAR SAID THAT THE INTUC REACHED ITS DECISION CONCERNING AAFLI WITH THE FULL UNDERSTANDING THAT AAFLI WAS CONSTITUTED BY THE AFL-CIO TO CONDUCT ITS PROGRAMS OF UNION-TO UNION COOPERATION IN ASIA. RECENT ALLEGATIONS ABOUT THE CIA'S USE OF AIFLI OPERATIONS IN LATIN AMERICAN HAVE ALSO, ACCORDING TO THAKAR, SENSITIZED INTUC ABOUT DEALING WITH
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PAGE 02 NEW DE 14978 061708Z

AAFLI.

2. THAKAR DID NOT FORECLOSE INTUC'S ESTABLISHING A PROGRAM WITH AAFLI AT A LATER TIME. HE URGED THAT FOR THE PRESENT THE AFL-CIO AND THE INTUC SHOULD CONTINUE TO WORK TO STRENGTHEN THEIR UNION-TO-UNION TIES IN THIS CONNECTION HE SUGGESTED THAT EXCHANGES OF FRATERNAL DELEGATIONS WOULD BE MOST HELPFUL. THE AFL-CIO WOULD RECEIVE AN INVITATION TO THE INTUC CONGRESS SCHEDULED FOR BOMBAY DECEMBER 28-29, AND THAKAR HOPED THAT SOMEONE FROM THE DELEGATION MIGHT REMAIN IN INDIA FOR A SHORT VISIT AFTER THE CONVENTION.

3. COMMENT: FOR OVER A YEAR AND A HALF AAFLI HAS BEEN SENDING REPRESENTATIVES TO INDIA AND CONDUCTING SMALL "EXPERIMENTAL" PROGRAMS IN AN EFFORT TO PAVE THE WAY FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A PERMANENT OFFICE IN INDIA. THE INTUC HAS, OF COURSE, BEEN AWARE OF AAFLI'S ACTIVITIES HERE IN WHICH ORGANIZATIONS AFFILIATED TO THE INTUC WERE DIRECTLY INVITED TO PARTICIPATE BY AAFLI. WHERE THE INTUC HAS RECEIVED INVITATIONS FROM AAFLI TO NOMINATE PARTICIPANTS FOR ITS PROGRAMS, THE INTUC HAS POLITELY DECLINED. AAFLI'S REQUEST TO INTUC FOR ENDORSEMENT OF ITS REQUEST TO OPEN AN OFFICE DOES, HOWEVER, REPRESENT THE FIRST TIME THAT THE INTUC HAS BEEN EXPLICITLY ASKED TO ENDORSE AN AAFLI PRESENCE IN INDIA. AAFLI HAS, IN EFFECT, FORCED THE ISSUE AT A TIME WHEN, IN OUR OPINION, THE INTUC DOES NOT BELIEVE THAT IT CAN PARTICIPATE IN USG-FUNDED PROGRAMS BEFORE THE GOI GIVES ITS GENERAL APPROVAL TO A RESUMPTION OF USG TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE ACTIVITIES. SO LONG AS INTUC'S RELATIONS WITH THE AFL-CIO CAN BE CONSTRUED AS "UNION-TO-UNION", I.E., NON-GOVERNMENTAL, NO SUCH PROBLEM ARISES. WE RECOMMEND THAT THE DEPARTMENT EXPLAIN THE SITUATION OF THE AFL-CIO AND AAFLI IN THIS LIGHT AND URGE THE AFL-CIO TO CONTINUE TO DEVELOP ITS RELATIONS WITH THE INTUC AND THE HMS OUTSIDE THE FRAMEWORK OF AAFLI FOR THE TIME BEING. THE SELECTION OF SENIOR AFL-CIO OFFICERS TO ATTEND THE INTUC CONGRESS WOULD BE MOST USEFUL IN THE FURTHERANCE OF RELATIONS BETWEEN THE US AND INDIAN LABOR MOVEMENTS. MOYNIHAN
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PAGE 03 NEW DE 14978 061708Z

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